

AAUP probes salary discrimination

by susanne dean

When the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) called a meeting last Wednesday, probably everyone was aware of the reason, of the purpose of the meeting. And after the article in the *Charlotte Observer* on Thursday, few even outside of the body fail to realize what is going on in and with that body.

Briefly, it is this. Committee W of the AAUP made a study of the financial status of women faculty members at UNCC, and drew some rather interesting conclusions. To quote from the report:

1. The percentage of women employed as full-time faculty members is too low.
2. Too many females full-time faculty members are employed in the lower ranks.
3. The average salaries of female faculty members with a few exceptions, are lower than their male counterparts.

The evidence to back up these claims is indeed quite convincing. For example, of 271 full time faculty members, only 56 are women (less than 25%) and of these about half are instructors, as compared to about 20% of male full-time faculty members at the instructor level.

Of 91 upper level faculty members, ten are women; three colleges employ female professors — Humanities, Nursing and Science and Mathematics. In these colleges, disparities in salaries are slight; sometimes the women come out slightly on top. However, in the other colleges, the five which employ no women at the professor level, women definitely get the short end of the stick. Consider: in HDL the average male salary is, for professor, \$25,968; in Science and Mathematics, \$18,399, as compared to an average of little over \$17,000.

Three colleges show favoritism for men at the associate professor level. HDL, by \$155, Humanities, by \$906, and Science and Mathematics, by \$5,073. In one case, female salary tops male by \$807 and that in the College of Social and Behavioral Science. The average salary in the College of Nursing which is all female is \$1,184 less than the averages of associate professors in any other college.

The salary comparisons for assistant professor are strikingly similar to those of associate; the one exception, the one woman to make better than her male counterparts, is in HDL, "where that average female salaries are \$350 higher than average male salaries."

The HDL exception to the rule also applies in the case of instructors. Here the HDL women make about \$540 more than salaries of men. "However, it should be noted that the average salaries of Instructors in HDL are lower than average salaries of Instructors of most other colleges."

Once again, favoritism toward men is revealed in the disparities in salary by Humanities (\$397) and by Science and Mathematics (\$867); this time Social and Behavioral Sciences join the ranks by an appalling \$3,219.

Although it is clear that women are not in every case uniformly and consistently discriminated against financially, there are hardly enough exceptions to the pattern to prove anything. The conclusions of Committee W: "Too few women have been hired; they are generally



employed in the lower ranks; and they have been and still are being paid lower salaries generally than their male counterparts — in clear violation of Federal Law."

There are four neat and interesting charts which accompany and illustrate the report. However, it is difficult to see the extent of the inequity in salaries since exact figures are not given; since averages have been taken and particular cases may not be cited.

One may, and, I suppose, should ask why the figures that Committee W had made available to it were not made available to the entire membership of AAUP and, subsequently, to the faculty as a whole. Dr. Witherspoon pointed out before Dr. Bryan began her report that the figures from which Committee W drew its conclusions and charges were withheld from the general body of the AAUP by a decision of its executive board.

Some members of the Executive Committee and those members constituted a majority, opposed the release of the figures on two grounds. First, they contended that faculty members have a right to privacy in these kinds of matters. Release of the figures could have proved embarrassing to certain faculty members. Secondly, there was a concern that the administration would not be so eager to cooperate with the faculty on matters of this sort if the figures were released.

The decision to withhold this information was however, not unanimous. There was an undercurrent of feeling displayed by members of the AAUP body as well as some members of the Executive Committee that they had the right to this information.

This may not seem so earthshaking at first. However, it seems that the primary problem is this: never before has this sort of problem occurred. Never has any faculty member, including deans of colleges, seen the salary figures for the entire faculty.

Therefore, the Executive Committee decided to put the information in a somewhat more palatable form, thus to avoid embarrassing anyone, including the administration and so that they could maintain a "working relationship with the administration."

One member of the AAUP body wished to explore the possibility of an overriding of the Executive Committee's decision by the body, and according to AAUP constitution, it can be done. Here tension and pressure mounted and such strenuous opposition to such a procedure was voiced that there was little likelihood of such an event occurring. And it did not.

Other avenues of action were discussed, and it was decided that copies of the AAUP report would go to every faculty member; that a letter would be sent to McEniry emphasizing the importance of the salary question; and that perhaps it is important that chairmen of departments have complete salary information.

When asked to respond to the findings of Committee W, D. W. Colvard said that "All chancellors have been involved in this issue" and that "Our purpose is to identify and remove discrimination if it exists." which is in essence the same as the purpose of the AAUP.

Dr. Colvard addressed the issue of the disparity between salaries in the humanities and in engineering, concentrating his argument around the "supply and demand" question: since World War II, there have been more jobs for engineers than for people in the humanities.

On the question of discrimination towards women in the university, the Chancellor remarked that in order to advance in the present system it is necessary for one to have a PhD degree. Only 21% of the women faculty members on this campus have doctorates, as opposed to 67% of the men, he said. And, he added, an attempt is made to find qualified women as well as blacks, to fill positions when there are vacancies.

"Our desire is to be as open as we can," said Dr. Colvard, "Protecting individual rights. It is no joy to be made to appear secretive."

At least one faculty member, and probably many others judging from the response he got when he made his statement had some reservations about the action of the AAUP committee in this affair, as well as towards the administration's stance on this issue. He said, at the meeting, "We are being told that it is to our advantage not to let anyone know just how sorry our salaries are." More than a few faculty members applauded.

